

Message Text

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TRSE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 EB-08 /073 W
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P R 131229Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7339
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USNMR SHAPE
USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 06339

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, AWACS, MILI
SUBJECT: AWACS: NEXT STEPS WITH THE FRG

REFS: (A) STATE 78248; (B) BONN 6215; (C) USNATO 2093
NOTAL

SUMMARY: A CONVERSATION WITH A SENIOR GERMAN MILITARY
OFFICER HERE HAS INDICATED THAT THE GERMANS WILL WANT
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TO REVIEW THE AWACS PROGRAM IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT
BRITISH DISASSOCIATION. SOME OF THE ISSUES RAISED BY
THE GERMANS APPEAR TO REQUIRE COORDINATED NATO STAFFING.
OTHERS CAN BE HANDLED THROUGH APPROPRIATE POLITICAL
DISCUSSIONS AT VARIOUS LEVELS. END SUMMARY

1. FURTHER TO THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO

INQUIRE ABOUT GERMAN VIEWS REGARDING AWACS (REF A), THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR CALLED ON GENERAL BRANDT, CHIEF OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE FRG DEFENSE MINISTRY. ALTHOUGH BRANDT IS NOT IMMEDIATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCUREMENT MATTERS, HE HAS OFTEN (AS IN REF B) PROVIDED FRANK AND USEFUL MATERIAL ON GERMAN POLITICAL/MILITARY POSITIONS.

2. BRANDT, READING FROM A CABLE SENT BY FRG NATO CHARGE BOSS, SAID THE FRG FULLY SUPPORTED BOSS'S STATEMENTS TO US DCM ALTHOUGH BOSS, IN LIGHT OF THE EASTER WEEKEND, HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GET CONFIRMING INSTRUCTIONS.

3. IN ADDITION, BRANDT MADE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS AS TO WHERE WE GO FROM HERE:

--IN THE LIGHT OF THE BRITISH DISASSOCIATION, NATO COULD NOT GO ON THE BASIS OF THE PREVIOUS AWACS PLANNING, SIMPLY MODIFIED BY JUGGLING NUMBERS.

--THE MINISTERIAL "YES" OF MARCH 25 HAD BEEN FOR A UNITARY AEW SYSTEM, NOT FOR A MIXED SYSTEM SUCH AS WOULD NOW BE NECESSARY.

--AN IMPORTANT NEXT STEP WOULD BE FOR THE NATO MILITARY STAFFS TO PROVIDE A REQUIREMENT ON THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT NEEDED AND ON THE IMPACT OF A NEW CONCEPT ON THE GROUND ENVIRONMENT SYSTEM.
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--IN THE PROCESS OF THIS REVIEW, THE CLOSEST ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID TO DETERMINING EXACT START-UP AND OPERATIONAL COSTS. TO DATE, THE FOCUS HAS BEEN ON THE FLY-AWAY PRICE, BUT OTHER ESTIMATES SHOULD ALSO BE REFINED IN ORDER TO PRESENT A CLEAR PICTURE TO NATO PARLIAMENTARIANS.

--IN THIS CONNECTION, A NEW SYSTEM MAY NOT BE CHEAPER THAN THE OLD BECAUSE MORE NADGE CHANNELS PER AIRCRAFT MAY BE REQUIRED. THIS HAD TO BE DETERMINED.

--THE PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING OF THE INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN PROGRAM GROUP (IEPG) WAS INDEED TO BRING THE FRENCH IN. IN FACT, THE FRG EVEN STRUCTURED THE PROPOSAL AND EDITED ITS STATEMENT IN WAYS CALCULATED TO EASE THE PATH FOR THE FRENCH.

--ALL THIS MEANT THAT NO IMMEDIATE DECISIONS ON

AWACS COULD BE EXPECTED. HOWEVER, THE FRG WAS
DETERMINED TO LOOK CLOSELY AT THESE MATTERS AND TO
COLLABORATE WITH US IN FINDING COMMON ANSWERS.

4. THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT

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EXCESSIVE DELAY. STRESSING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING
WITHOUT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS, HE OBSERVED THAT IT
WOULD MAKE AN MOCKERY OF THE EFFORTS OF THE MOST SENIOR
NATO DEFENSE OFFICIALS IF THE NATO AEW PROGRAM WERE
TO BECOME MIRED AFTER MOST OF THOSE OFFICIALS HAD

COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO IT. HE OBSERVED THAT IN THE
LIGHT OF THE SOVIET BUILD-UP, ESPECIALLY IN AIRCRAFT, NATO
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WOULD BE CONDEMNED IF IT CONCENTRATED ON DISCOVERING
COMPLEXITIES RATHER THAN SOLUTIONS. HE ALSO POINTED
OUT THAT, NO MATTER WHAT AWACS COST, A FUTURE AEW
SYSTEM OF SIMILAR EFFICIENCY MIGHT WELL COST MORE.

5. BRANDT AGREED EMPHATICALLY WITH EACH OF THESE
POINTS AND REITERATED THAT THE FRG WISHED
TO TAKE A SERIOUS AND PRECISE LOOK AT A MIXED
SYSTEM IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE IT IN A WAY THAT
WOULD GUARANTEE PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL. HE EXPRESSED
THE BELIEF THAT THE STAFFING AND THE PROCESS FOR
MINISTERIAL DECISION AND PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL COULD
BE COMPLETED THIS YEAR. HE REITERATED, HOWEVER, THE
NEED FOR THE CLOSEST AND MOST DETAILED POSSIBLE JUSTI-
FICATION TO THE BUNDESTAG, WHICH WAS RELUCTANT TO
TACKLE NEW PROGRAMS AT THIS TIME.

6. COMMENT: TO THOSE FAMILIAR WITH AWACS, MANY
OF THE POINTS RAISED BY GENERAL BRANDT WILL HAVE A
FAMILIAR RING TO THEM. NONETHELESS, WE BELIEVE HIS
CONCERN ABOUT OBTAINING PRECISE FUNDING INFORMATION
REFLECTS NOT ONLY HIS PERSONAL VIEWS BUT THOSE OF
SENIOR GERMAN OFFICIALS. THE USG HAS HEARD THIS MANY
TIMES IN THE PAST YEAR, EVEN AS WE WERE APPROACHING
THE MARCH MINISTERIAL, AND THE GERMANS WILL CLEARLY
SEE THIS AS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO GET ALL THE COSTS
LINED UP AS WELL AS TO GET A CLEAR MILITARY REQUIRE-
MENT THAT THEY CAN PRESENT TO THE BUNDESTAG.

7. THE POLITICAL SITUATION ON AEW FOR THE FRG REMAINS
MUCH AS IT WAS: THE UNIFORMED SERVICES OPPOSE THE
SYSTEM BECAUSE THEY FEAR IT WOULD TAKE FUNDS FROM
THEIR ESTABLISHED AND PLANNED PROGRAMS. THEY HAVE
GOOD CONNECTIONS AMONG THE MILITARY COMMITTEES IN THE
BUNDESTAG, AND THEY USE THOSE CONNECTIONS TO RAISE
EMBARRASSING QUESTIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT. LEBER'S
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DECISION, SUPPORTED BY SCHMIDT, TO VOTE "YES" AT THE
SPECIAL MINISTERIAL UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECTED THE FRG'S
DETERMINATION TO KEEP AWACS OFF THE LIST OF US-FRG
CONTENTIOUS ISSUES AT THIS PARTICULAR JUNCTURE.

HOWEVER, LEBER IS NOW COMMITTED AND THIS SHOULD REPRESENT AN ASSET FOR US.

8. THE BRITISH DISASSOCIATION PRESENTS A FISCAL AND A POLITICAL PROBLEM. ON THE FISCAL SIDE, IT MEANS THAT THE FORMULA THAT WE PROPOSED FOR EARLY BRITISH AND LATER GERMAN PROCUREMENT FUNDING NOW GOES BY THE BOARD. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, IT MEANS LESS NATO PARTICIPATION AND IT LEAVES CONSIDERABLE RESENTMENT HERE OVER THE BRITISH DECISION TO GO IT ALONE AFTER LEBER AND OTHERS HAD MADE A MAXIMUM EFFORT.(FOR EXAMPLE, BRANDT ASSERTED THAT THE FRG WOULD NOT "REWARD" BRITAIN BY SANCTIONING AWACS STATIONING IN THE UK.) ALTHOUGH HMG (AND US EMBASSY, LONDON) FREQUENTLY WARNED THAT THE BRITISH WOULD GO IT ALONE, AT LEAST SOME ELEMENTS ON THE GERMAN SIDE HOPED THEY WOULD NOT.

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9. THE MOST DIFFICULT PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECT OF AWACS REMAINS THE LINK WITH TANK HARMONIZATION. FEW GERMANS SPEAK OF IT OFFICIALLY, BUT THOSE THAT DO ASSERT THAT IT IS AN IMMUTABLE POLITICAL REALITY THAT THE FRG WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN AWACS IF IT BELIEVES IT HAS NOT RECEIVED A FAIR SHAKE ON THE TANK HARMONIZATION PROGRAM. CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT BRITAIN IN THIS CASE ALSO HAPPENS TO BE A COMPETITOR DOES NOT MAKE THE SITUATION EASIER.

10. WE ARE UNABLE AT THIS TIME TO ESTIMATE ANY ULTIMATE GERMAN COST COMMITMENT (AS SUGGESTED IN REF C). IT WOULD APPEAR THAT CONSIDERABLE WORK WILL NEED TO BE DONE BEFORE ANY SUCH COMMITMENT CAN BE LOCKED IN CONCRETE, IF INDEED IT COMES AT ALL. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE GERMANS CANNOT COMMIT THEMSELVES TO HEAVY FUNDING IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS, WHEN THEIR DEFENSE BUDGET WILL BE DEDICATED PRINCIPALLY TO SCHEDULED PROCUREMENT OF TANKS AND AIRCRAFT AS WELL AS OTHER EQUIPMENT.

11. WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT GERMAN CONCERNS REGARDING BROAD NATO PARTICIPATION HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY MET, DESPITE THE BRITISH DECISION, SO THAT THE POLITICAL CLIMATE SURROUNDING THE DISCUSSION OF AWACS WILL BE MORE POSITIVE THAN ON OCCASIONS IN THE PAST.

12. WE WILL FOLLOW UP HERE IN FURTHER CONVERSATIONS WITH FRG OFFICIALS, THOUGH WE ARE NOT AT THIS MOMENT INCLINED TO APPROACH LEBER FORMALLY. WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH NATO STAFFING AS MAY BE REQUIRED TO ANSWER THE GERMAN NEED FOR PRECISE FISCAL DATA SHOULD FIND US SUPPORT AND WE WILL CONTINUE HERE TO POINT OUT THE POTENTIAL UTILITY OF THE SYSTEM. WE WOULD WELCOME WASHINGTON GUIDANCE ON THE BASIS OF ITS EVALUATION OF ALLIANCE PROSPECTS. END COMMENT. STOESEL

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